

National-type school system stays, says Najib
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KUCHING – The government will not abolish the national-type school system in the country to facilitate the development of creative and innovative human capital with multilingual capability apart from being proficient in the national language, the prime minister said.

Najib Abdul Razak said Malaysia was the only country in Southeast Asia which still defended the vernacular school system through the Chinese and Tamil national-type schools.

"In Malaysia, the national-type school is still being recognised and assisted by the government.

"If we look at our neighbours, there are no vernacular schools although they existed at one time," he said when declaring open the new building of SJK Chung Hua Sungai Tapang Hilir, costing RM9.3 million, here Sunday.

He said that to ensure a fair policy for these schools, the government allocated RM145 million in the country's economic stimulus package for the development of Chinese national-type schools nationwide.

He added that the vernacular school system was recognised not only by the Chinese and Indian communities but also the Bumiputeras due to the advantage it provided in the learning of Mandarin and Tamil.

He said that since the Education Act 1996 was formulated, Chinese national-type schools attracted 55,975 Bumiputera students out of 612,000 students overall.

"The system provides a unique opportunity for the students to learn three major languages -- the national language, English and Mandarin," Bernama quoted him as saying.

He said that in achieving the vision of making Malaysia a developed nation, it was also pertinent for the people to be proficient in many languages, especially in Mandarin in view of the rise of China as an economic power.

"To make Malaysia a developed nation, we should not only emphasis on our children's education but also on opening their mind to make them more creative and innovative," he said.